

Occasional Papers
OF THE
Boston Society of Natural History.

THE IDENTITY OF *TROCHILUS RUCKERI* BOURCIER.

BY OUTRAM BANGS AND THOMAS E. PENARD.

FOR a long time the name *Threnetes ruckeri*, based on *Trochilus ruckeri* Bourcier (Proc. Zool. Soc. London, 1847, p. 46) has been used for a Costa Rican hummingbird of which a southern form, inhabiting Ecuador and western Colombia, has borne the name *Threnetes fraseri* (Gould). Bourcier's description, however, does not agree with the northern form, a fact already discussed by Hellmayr (Proc. Zool. Soc. London, 1911, p. 1177), Simon (Hist. Nat. Trochil., 1921, p. 250), and Todd (Ann. Carnegie Mus., vol. 14, 1922, p. 271). We fully appreciate the reluctance of these authors to make any change affecting nomenclature until the type in the old Loddiges collection might be examined. Such an examination, if possible, would be highly desirable. On the other hand, we believe that Bourcier's description so clearly applies to the southern form now known as *Threnetes fraseri*, that we cannot conceive in what manner an investigation of the type could possibly affect the situation. Bourcier says definitely that the under parts of the body are gray black, bronzed, that the head, neck, scapulars, back, and tail-coverts are shiny dark green, and that the middle of the tail is blue black. These characters all apply to the southern, not to the northern bird; and we, therefore, do not hesitate to attach the name *ruckeri* to the form which is currently known as *fraseri*.

The Costa Rican bird being thus without a name, we propose to call it

Threnetes ruckeri ventosus, subsp. nov.

Type, adult ♂, Museum of Comparative Zoology, no. 116,624, from Pozo Azul, western Costa Rica, 21 February, 1898; collected by C. F. Underwood.

Subspecific characters.—Similar to *Threnetes ruckeri ruckeri* (Bourcier) of western Ecuador, but upper parts bronzy green instead of shiny grass-green; middle portion of the tail-feathers (except the middle pair) dull blackish without any bluish or purplish tint; belly pale, buffy gray.

Measurements.—Type, adult ♂: wing, 60.0; tail, 35.5; exposed culmen, 29.5.

Remarks.—Hellmayr (*loc. cit.*) has already called attention to the fact that the size of the buffy throat-spot is not diagnostic because it varies with the age of the individual. This we find to be

the case. In fact a very young bird, not yet full-grown, no. 117, 670 in the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy, has no cinnamon-rufous patch whatever, and since Bourcier does not mention such a patch at all, we suspect that he had a young bird. Also in the series of fifteen specimens from Costa Rica, examined by us, there is none, young or adult, with any green or bronze on the chest such as Bourcier described by the words "*gris-noir bronzé*," whereas in the southern form the dark-gray chest is strongly mixed with green.

The Darien bird, *Threnetes ruckeri darienensis* Bangs and Barbour, has much paler gray under parts than true *ruckeri*, and the middle portions of the tail-feathers are not purplish. The upper parts, however, are dark green as in the bird from Esmeraldas, — in other words, it is an intermediate form. A bird from the Caribbean coast of Panama in the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy at Cambridge and, according to Chapman (Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist., vol. 36, 1917, p. 279), birds from the Canal Zone, are also intermediate but much nearer the Costa Rican than the Darien form.

We have used the generic term *Threnetes* instead of *Heteroglaucis*, because the characters of the latter appear to be of sub-generic rather than of generic value. The four subspecies of Rucker's Hermit are thus:

1. *Threnetes ruckeri ruckeri* (Bourcier), Proc. Zool. Soc. London, 1847, p. 46. (No type locality stated — we select Esmeraldas, northwestern Ecuador.)

Range: western Ecuador and western Colombia.

2. *Threnetes ruckeri darienensis* Bangs and Barbour, Bull. Mus. Comp. Zoöl., vol. 65, no. 6, 1922, p. 204 (Mt. Sapo, eastern Panama).

Range: eastern Panama to State of Santander and Santa Marta, Colombia.

3. *Threnetes ruckeri venezuelensis* Cory, Field Mus. Publ., no. 167, ornith ser., vol. 1, no. 7, 1913, p. 286 (Orope Zulia, Venezuela). Not seen by us.

Range: western Venezuela.

4. *Threnetes ruckeri ventosus* Bangs and Penard. (Type locality: Pozo Azul, western Costa Rica.)

Range: Costa Rica, north to Nicaragua (to Guatemala?); south to Canal Zone of Panama where not typical, approaching *T. r. darienensis*.